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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 18, 2003

**SACRAMENTO MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO CONSPIRACY IN
MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR ADVANCE FEE FRAUD SCHEME**

SACRAMENTO--United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today that ROLAND ADAMS, 37, of Sacramento, the owner of Adams Business Services, pleaded guilty today to conspiracy to commit mail and wire fraud, and conspiracy to launder money in connection with a fraud scheme that resulted in losses to victims exceeding \$2.1 million.

ADAMS admitted that between February 2001 and June 2002, he conspired with others in Nigeria, South Africa, and Canada to operate a Nigerian advance fee fraud scheme (also known as "4-1-9" fraud after the section of the Nigerian penal code that addresses fraud schemes). As part of the scheme, Adams and international co-conspirators mailed solicitation letters purportedly from officials of African governments or government agencies. The solicitation letters sought assistance in diverting to private use millions of dollars held in fictitious investment accounts or trusts. In exchange for the victims' agreement to receive the diverted funds and return the substantial majority to the purported official, the victims were promised a portion of the diverted funds.

Victims, who often communicated with ADAMS and his co-conspirators using e-mail, were assessed fees to facilitate the diversion of the fictitious funds. Those fees typically amounted to 1% of the total fund transfer amount, totaling anywhere from several thousand to several hundred thousand dollars. Some victims were required to send the fees to specified individuals in South Africa and Canada; other victims were instructed to wire fees to other accounts around the world. A portion of the funds collected by his international co-conspirators was forwarded to ADAMS in Sacramento.

As part of the scheme, ADAMS registered the Internet domain names Afribankcorp.com, Bancofafrica.com, and Bancofeasterncarribean.com [sic] and had web sites created for the fictitious banks. Victims were directed to these web sites, which were used to track the progress of the transactions and give the fraud scheme the illusion of legitimacy.

According to Assistant United States Attorneys Benjamin B. Wagner and Camil A. Skipper, who are prosecuting the case, the maximum penalty under federal law for conspiracy to commit mail and wire fraud is 5 years imprisonment and a fine of \$250,000, and the maximum

penalty for conspiracy to launder money is 20 years imprisonment and a fine of \$500,000. Restitution to victims, which could total more than \$2.1 million, is mandatory. ADAMS will be sentenced for these offenses before U.S. District Judge Edward J. Garcia on October 27, 2003.

The indictment also seeks the forfeiture of ADAMS' Sacramento home, over \$87,000 seized from various bank and investment accounts, a laptop computer, and the Internet domain names used in the scheme. A non-jury trial dealing solely with the issue of forfeiture is scheduled for September 22, 2003, before Judge Garcia.

In addition, the defendant is charged in a separate indictment with unlawful procurement of citizenship or naturalization and making a false statement. That indictment alleges that ADAMS, a naturalized United States citizen, made false statements during his naturalization interview. If convicted, the maximum penalty under federal law is 10 years imprisonment. A conviction also would result in revocation of ADAMS' naturalization and his deportation. The indictment is only an accusation, and ADAMS is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty of these charges.

This case is the product of an extensive investigation by the United States Secret Service, with the assistance of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. For additional information concerning this type of fraud, see the United States Secret Service Public Awareness Advisory Regarding "4-1-9" or "Advance Fee Fraud" Schemes at www.secretservice.gov/alert419.shtml.

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